

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Polish Dignitary Visits the Region to Build Stronger Business Links**

The Marshall of Lodz in Poland arrived in Birmingham last night for a two day visit to the West Midlands, organised by the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The visit marks a step towards a closer working relationship between the two Regions in order to boost regional businesses.

Mr Wlodzmierz Fisiak, Marshall of Poland's second largest city, will today meet with business leaders at Birmingham International Airport, as well as take a special tour of the new Polish War Memorial, set to be unveiled later this month at the National Memorial Arboretum.

"I first met the Marshall in 2006 when I visited Poland to sign a letter of intent to develop inter-regional cooperation between the West Midlands and region of Lodz, and it is a great honour to now welcome such an important guest to the West Midlands." said Cllr David Smith, Chairman of the Assembly.

"Our aim is that by working closer together we can help boost local and regional businesses by encouraging cross trade, investment and development, as well as creating strong tourism links. The trip will be made even more special by a visit to the breathtaking new Polish War Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum."

Business Voice WM Executive Director, James Watkins, said: "Lodz is critical to the lifeblood of the Polish economy and it is vital, for the sake of our own economy, that we develop good relations with this important city. Local government and business are united in ensuring that links with Poland leads to new jobs in the Midlands".

**ENDS**

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## Notes to Editors

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands Region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 elected members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Leaders Board (WMLB) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands Region.
5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body.
6. For further information, visit our website [www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)